

Environmental Assessment Checklist

Project Name: DC Livestock Stock Water Tank 2017

Proposed Implementation Date: June 2017

Proponent: Dillon Unit, Central Land Office, Montana DNRC

County: Beaverhead

Type and Purpose of Action

Description of Proposed Action:

The Dillon Unit of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is proposing the DC Livestock Stock Water Tank 2017. The project is located approximately 12 miles North West of Dillon, MT (refer to Attachments vicinity map A-1 and includes the following section: 36, T5S - R10W.

Beneficiary	Legal Description	Total Acres	Treated Acres
Common Schools	Sec 36, T5S – R10W	480	0.01
Public Buildings			
MSU 2 nd Grant			
MSU Morrill			
Eastern College-MSU/Western College-U of M			
Montana Tech			
University of Montana			
School for the Deaf and Blind			
Pine Hills School			
Veterans Home			
Public Land Trust			
Acquired Land			

Objectives of the project include:

Install approximately 250 feet of underground water pipeline that leads to a 13 foot tire stock water tank that will be used to water livestock.

Proposed activities include:

Duration of Activities:	Permanent structure
Implementation Period:	July 2017

The lands involved in this proposed project are held in trust by the State of Montana. (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889; 1972 Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the DNRC are required by law to administer these trust lands to produce

the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for the beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA).

The DNRC would manage lands involved in this project in accordance with:

- All other applicable state and federal laws.

Project Development

SCOPING:

- DATE:
 - June 2, 2017
- PUBLIC SCOPED:
 - Lazy AU Ranch Co.
 - Marchessea Ranch
 - Beaverhead County Commissioners
- AGENCIES SCOPED:
 - Craig Fager Wildlife Biologist with MT FWP
 - Patrick Rennie DNRC Archeologist
 - Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Program
- COMMENTS RECEIVED:
 - How many: 3 comments were received, one from the Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Program, FWP Wildlife Biologist and Marchessea Ranch
 - Concerns: Weed Management is required within General Habitat for Sage Grouse. Reclamation of disturbed areas must include control of noxious weeds and invasive plant species, including cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and Japanese brome (*Bromus japonicas*).
 - Results (how were concerns addressed): Weed management of tract will be incorporated into to the approval of the improvement as well as the installation of an escape ramp for wildlife.
 - Marchessea Ranch wanted to know where the water for the stock tank was coming from. Marchessea's own the rights to Dutchman spring which is in the vicinity of the project. The stock water for this proposal will originate from a private well owned by DC Livestock on deeded property.

DNRC specialists were consulted, including Archeologist Patrick Rennie: *A class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The class I search results revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE, but it should be noted that Class III level inventory work has not been conducted there to date.*

Because the topographic setting and geology suggest a low to moderate likelihood of the presence of cultural or paleontological resources, proposed pipeline installation work is expected to have No Effect to Antiquities. No additional archeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural

or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

FWP Wildlife Biologist: Commented that the area is considered prime big game winter range and would like to see us do some conifer encroachment management on the state section. He felt that the water tank is a net benefit for sage grouse in the area.

Internal and external issues and concerns were incorporated into project planning and design and will be implemented in associated with the Action Alternative.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS

NEEDED: (Conservation Easements, Army Corps of Engineers, road use permits, etc.) **NO OTHER PERMITS ARE NEEDED. Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Program approval has been received.**

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No-Action Alternative: DC Livestock would be denied permission to install 250 feet of underground pipeline and a 13 foot tire stock tank on state trust land.

Action Alternative: DC Livestock would be allowed to plow in an underground pipeline, approximately 250 feet in length, and install a 13 foot tire stock tank to water livestock on state trust land.

Impacts on the Physical Environment

Evaluation of the impacts on the No-Action and Action Alternatives including **direct, secondary, and cumulative** impacts on the Physical Environment.

VEGETATION:

Vegetation Existing Conditions: The most recent Range inspection indicated that the predominant grasses are blue bunch wheat grass, needle and thread, threadleaf, sandberg bluegrass, western wheatgrass and scattered sagebrush. Of the 440 acres of grazing ground present on the tract, there are 107 AUM available for grazing annually.

Vegetation	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Noxious Weeds	X				X				X					
Rare Plants	X				X				X					
Vegetative community	X				X				X					
Old Growth	X				X				X					
Action														
Noxious Weeds		X				X			X				Yes	1

Vegetation	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Rare Plants	X				X				X					
Vegetative community	X				X				X					
Old Growth	X				X				X					

Comments: 1. DC Livestock as the current lessee of the section is required to control all noxious weed occurrences on their lease. Under the Action Alternative the stipulations of this improvement request will include the requirement of monitoring and spraying any noxious weed occurrences associated with this proposal.

Vegetation Mitigations: Monitor the site for three years and spray any weeds that occur due to vegetation disturbance associated with this proposal.

SOIL DISTURBANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY:

Soil Disturbance and Productivity Existing Conditions: Soils are classified as 191D-Haxby-Kalsted-Zbart complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes. The parent material is Alluvium and or slope alluvium over residuum weathered from igneous and sedimentary rock. The soils are well drained and are not prime farm land. They have a land capability classification of 6e. For the most part they are porous and well drained.

Soil Disturbance and Productivity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)	X													
Erosion	X													
Nutrient Cycling	X													
Slope Stability	X													
Soil Productivity	X													
Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)		X				X			X				No	1
Erosion	X													
Nutrient Cycling	X													
Slope Stability	X													
Soil Productivity	X													

Comments: 1. The area around the 13 foot tire stock tank will have heavy livestock use and will have compacted and rutted soils around the tank. The area affected will be an area 40X40 square feet in size.

Soil Mitigations: No mitigation around the tank are planned. The pipeline will be plowed in and vegetation put back in place after installation.

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY: There are no perennial streams located near the proposed project location.

Water Quality and Quantity Existing Conditions: Ground conditions are dry with an intermittent stream near by the project proposal that may run water after large run-off events.

Water Quality & Quantity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Water Quality	X				X				X					
Water Quantity	X				X				X					
Action														
Water Quality	X				X				X					
Water Quantity	X				X				X					

Comments: No impacts to water quality, quantity or distribution will occur under either of the proposed alternatives.

Water Quality & Quantity Mitigations: No mitigation measures are required under either of the proposed alternatives..

WILDLIFE:

No-Action: No impacts, or changes to wildlife use would occur under this alternative.

Action Alternative (see Wildlife table below): This proposal is less than 0.10 acres in size and will have little effect on wildlife species that live in the area. The FWP wildlife biologist stated that water developments are good for many species of wild life for they allow for use by wild life that live in the area.

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Threatened and Endangered Species														
Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo</i>)	X				X				X					
Sensitive Species														
Sage Thrasher (<i>Oreoscoptes</i>)	X				X				X					

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
<i>montanus</i> Habitat: Sagebrush and grass habitat types.														
Brewers Sparrow <i>(Spizella breweri)</i> Habitat: Sagebrush grass steppe	X				X				X					
Ferruginous Hawk <i>(Buteo regalis)</i> Habitat: grasslands, short-grass prairie, sagebrush steppe	X				X				X					
Golden Eagle <i>(Aquila chrysaetos)</i> Habitat: open prairie and open woodlands	X				X				X					
Green-tailed Towhee <i>(Pipilo chlorurus)</i> Habitat: edge of sagebrush communities	X				X				X					
Fringed Myotis <i>(Myotis thysanodes)</i> Habitat: sagebrush-grassland and woodland habitats	X				X				X					
Greater Sage grouse <i>(Centrocercus urophasianus)</i> Habitat: sagebrush semi-desert	X				X				X					1
Townsend's big-eared bat <i>(Plecotus townsendii)</i> Habitat: Caves, caverns, old mines	X				X				X					
Big Game Species														
Elk	X													
Whitetail	X													
Mule Deer	X													

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Other														
Pronghorn	X				X				X					

Comments: Water developments have a positive impact on sage grouse numbers.

Wildlife Mitigations: wildlife escape ramps will be installed into the stock tank.

AIR QUALITY: The proposal is located in a remote area away from population centers. The project is not located in a class 1 air shed and a non-attainment zone.

Air Quality	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Smoke	X				X				X					
Dust	X				X				X					
Action														
Smoke	X				X				X					
Dust		X			X				X				No	1

Comments: 1. during the installation phase of this project some dust and particulates will be put into the air. No long term, secondary or cumulative effects will occur to air quality from this proposal.

Air Quality Mitigations: No mitigation practices will be needed for the installation of the 13 foot stock tank. This is a small project with a short installation phase and will have little impact on air quality of the area.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES / AESTHETICS / DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	X				X				X					
Aesthetics	X				X				X					

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	X				X				X					
Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	X				X				X				Yes	1.
Aesthetics	X				X				X					
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	X				X				X					

Comments: 1. If Cultural Resources are identified during the installation of the pipeline or stock tank operations are to cease and the DNRC Archeologist will be contacted to inspect the site.

Mitigations: Archeologist will be contacted if cultural resources are discovered during the installation of the pipeline or stock tank.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: *List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

- The area of the proposal is located out of a population center and there isn't any planning or zoning regulations currently in place. The proposal is a common practice in this area to provide water for livestock.

Impacts on the Human Population

Evaluation of the impacts on the proposed action including **direct, secondary, and cumulative** impacts on the Human Population.

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Health and Human Safety	X				X				X					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production	X				X				X					

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	X				X				X					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	X				X				X					
Demand for Government Services	X				X				X					
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	X				X				X					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	X				X				X					
Social Structures and Mores	X				X				X					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	X				X				X					
Action														
Health and Human Safety	X				X				X					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production	X				X				X					
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	X				X				X					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	X				X				X					
Demand for Government Services	X				X				X					
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	X				X				X					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	X				X				X					
Social Structures and Mores	X				X				X					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	X				X				X					

Comments: No Impacts are anticipated

Mitigations: No Impacts are anticipated

Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals: *List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

- No Impacts are anticipated

Other Appropriate Social and Economic Circumstances:

Costs, revenues and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives. They are not intended to be used as absolute estimates of return. The estimated stumpage is based on comparable sales analysis. This method compares recent sales to find a market value for stumpage. These sales have similar species, quality, average diameter, product mix, terrain, date of sale, distance from mills, road building and logging systems, terms of sale, or anything that could affect a buyer's willingness to pay.

No Action: The No Action alternative would not generate any return to the trust at this time.

Action: There would be no monetary increase to the trust as a result of this proposed project. Potential benefits of the project would be improved water availability to livestock, and wildlife in the vicinity of the stock tank.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?

No known potential risks or adverse effects are anticipated by this proposal.

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?

No known cumulative impacts would be anticipated if the proposal is approved and implemented.

Environmental Assessment Checklist Prepared By:

Name: Timothy Egan
Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Date: June 19, 2017

Finding

Alternative Selected

Action Alternative: DC Livestock would be allowed to plow in an underground pipeline, approximately 250 feet in length, and install a 13 foot tire stock tank to water livestock on state trust land.

Significance of Potential Impacts

This proposed action will have little impact to the environment but will allow better distribution of livestock over the 440 acre lease. It should also provide seasonal water use by wildlife species including sage grouse during the dry summer months. No long term or cumulative impacts area anticipated.

Need for Further Environmental Analysis

☐ EIS

☐ More Detailed EA

☒ No Further Analysis

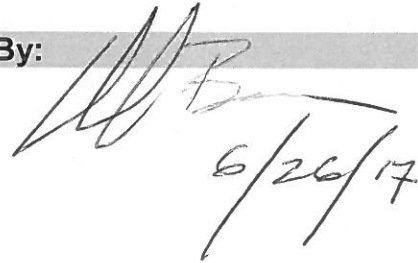
Environmental Assessment Checklist Approved By:

Name: Martin Balukas

Title: CLO Trust Lands Manager

Date: June 20, 2017

Signature: /s/ Martin Balukas



Handwritten signature of Martin Balukas and the date 6/26/17.

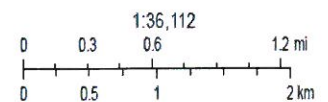
Attachment A - Maps

DC Livestock Water Improvement - T5S, R10W, Sec 36



May 31, 2017

-  Valuation Tracts
-  PLSS Township



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DCopple
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

A-1: Vicinity Map

